the commitments and Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and other welfare schemes.

(b) Yes, Sir. The Cabinet has approved a proposal for relaxing the quality and phytosanitary specifications for imported wheat to enable wider participation by the suppliers.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Approximately 92,000 MTs of imported wheat has reached the Indian ports. The remaining quantity of wheat is scheduled to arrive at the Indian ports between July 2006 to January 2007.

(e) As per reply in para (a) above, the shortfall, if any, in the Central Pool, would be met by additional import.

(f) The rising trend in prices has been halted and the prices are expected to come down once the imported wheat reaches the market in bulk quantities.

Imports vis-a-vis prices of foodgrains

†462. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that consumer sale prices of foodgrains particularly of pulses and wheat in the country has not declined despite import by Government and announcing relaxation in duties;

(b) if so, the facts in this regard and whether it is a fact that there is no major difference in the prices of foodgrains in foreign countries as compared to India; and

(c) if not, the deals finalized for import of wheat, sugar and pulses by the end of June alongwith their quantity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) While retail prices of pulses registered a decline in all centres in Northern and Southern zone and few centres in the

†Originai notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Western and Eastern zone, retail prices of wheat declined at Lucknow, Patna, Thiruvananthapuram and Bangalore.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Three contracts for import of 35 lakh tonnes of wheat have been executed by the State Trading Corporation of India with foreign suppliers to meet the requirements of the Central Pool. Besides, National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited has executed contract for import of 30,000 metric tonnes of pulses.

Relaxation of norms for wheat import

463. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the latest 2.2 million tonnes wheat import tender issued by the State Trading Corporation on 12th June, 2006, the quality norms and food safety standards have been significantly diluted, in allowing the presence of an increased level of certain banned quarantine weed seeds and other toxins and the exporting countries would be free to choose their sampling procedures and the extent of fumigation; and

(b) if so, the details of the relaxations made, the specific reasons/ compulsions therefor and whether the imported poorer quality of wheat would be fit for human consumption?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) In the latest 2.2 million tonnes wheat import tender issued by State Trading Corporation (STC) on 12th June 2006, following norms in respect of Plant Quarantine regulations and permissible limit of Deoxynivalenol (DON) toxin and pesticide residue limit under PFAAct/Rules have been amended:

(i) The wheat consignment would be required to be certified to contain not more than 0.01% Ergot (Claviceps purpurea) w/w.

(ii) The wheat consignment would be required to be certified to contain not more than 0.005% Dwarf bunt (Tiiletia contraversa) w/w.